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A REVIEW of times past, and contemplations on future prospects, humbly attempted for general instruction, and to excite pious meditations, &c. : or the Editors' NEW-YEAR'S GIFT, to their generous readers.

(Contin. from Vol. III. p. 249.)

ANOTHER year is gone. Yes, irrecoverably gone. Millions are gone with it to the grave, and to judgment. All the living, solemn thought! have been wasted on one year nearer to eternity and their final doom. With millions this will be the last year. Great numbers will live but a small part of it. Every portion of time, each month, and day, and hour, is pregnant with great events. There is not a minute in which there are not more persons exchanging worlds, and going to judgment, than there are seconds in it.* All begin their new year, with an entire uncertainty what will be the events of it with

respect to themselves. No one can determine that he shall not be the first who shall be called to mourn for the loss of his dearest enjoyments, or whose days shall be numbered and finished. For man also knoweth not his time. The eternal happiness or misery of every man beyond the grave, depends wholly on the manner in which he employs the fleeting, precarious moments appointed to him upon the earth. Every day and hour will either increase his treasure in heaven and eternally enhance the glory and blessedness of his future reward, or add to the magnitude of his guilt, and forever increase the severity of his punishment. In this view how should every mind be impressed with the propriety and force of that apostolic injunction; *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil?* The words import, that the wisdom of man consisteth in the redemption and right use of time, and that to embezzle, or misimprove it is the most egregious folly. But what

* According to the common estimate of mortality, about thirty five, or thirty six millions die annually; and about seventy or eighty every minute.

is time? What is it to redeem time? May not an answer to these inquiries lead us to such a view of times past and times to come as shall furnish us with meditations suitable for the New Year's day? Meditations calculated to make us wise and useful while we live, and honorable and blessed when time with us shall be no more?

TIME in a general sense is the measure of the earthly creation in its present manner of existence. When the Creator said, Let there be light and there was light; and the evening and the morning were the first day, time began. When the trump of God shall sound, the dead arise, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burnt up, time will be no more. The elect will be gathered in, and the mystery of God finished. The duration of time, probably, will be, between seven and eight thousand years. About 2,514 elapsed before the giving of the law at mount Sinai. From that time to the birth of Christ, was about 1,486 years, making in the whole 4,000 years. The term from the advent of our Saviour, to the millennium, or thousand years of light, purity and peace to the church, is generally computed from the prophetic representations at 2,000 years more. This glorious Sabbath of a thousand years will make the complete term of 7000 years. It is written, *After that satan must be loosed for a little season, and shall go out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth**: and to gather them together, to compass the camp of the saints about. Christ is then represented as coming to the complete deliverance of the church, the total overthrow

of his enemies, and to the judgment of the world. This, according to the common course of providence, may be accomplished in a few centuries. As the divine Spirit hath termed it, *a little season*, and as no events are assigned to it, but the sudden and great apostacy, and the gathering together of the wicked to compass the camp of the saints about, and the holy city, it is reasonable to believe, that the time will be short.

THE whole duration of time, be it longer or shorter, is laid out to a moment, in the divine purpose, with all its different periods and events. He hath appointed the time of the rise, duration, and fall of kingdoms and empires, the countries in which they were to flourish, and the time, place and circumstances of every man's existence. *And hath made of one blood, all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.** He hath laid out all the great periods of time: That from the creation to the deluge; from that to the giving of the law; and thence to the coming of the Messiah. He determined the period from the incarnation of the Saviour unto the rise of Mahomet, and the man of sin; in which he would support the church under the heathen beast; and the 1260 years of the reign of the man of sin, that monster of iniquity, who exalteth himself above all that is called God. He devised and laid out the thousand years, which is to be a glorious Sabbath of rest and joy to the church, the judgment of the great day, and all the smaller periods of which those

* Revelation xi. 7, 8.

* Acts xviii. 26.

grand divisions have been or will be composed ; and all the events with which they have been, or shall be filled. They are all times which he hath put in his power, and the events of which he has governed and will govern according to his purpose ; for his own glory, and the perfection and blessedness of his moral kingdom.

THE times of men are all in his hands. Man's time is that period which God hath appointed him, in the present world. All but this, to him, is eternity, be it ever so short. *Is there not an appointed time unto man upon earth* ? His days are determined, the number of his months are with thee ; thou hast set his bounds that he cannot pass.†* There is a particular hour or moment which is termed man's time. This is the hour, or moment of his dissolution. For *man also knoweth not his time.* This is emphatically his time, as it is to him the end of all time and opportunities, the commencement of eternity, and determines his endless condition.

ALL the great and all the small divisions of time, teem with events worthy of God. He suffers not a moment to pass without effecting something for his glory and the good of his kingdom.

TIME accomplishes all those events by which God is glorified, his church erected, sanctified, protected, finally saved and glorified. Time will prepare all the vessels of mercy for glory, and fit all the vessels of wrath for destruction. There is not a moment of time well improved but what will honor the Creator, add lustre to the crowns and increase the joys of the saints for ever. Every day and hour misimproved will increase

the shame, and punishment of the sinner through interminable ages. Of time no man can boast. No, not of tomorrow, not of an hour, not of a moment : For it is written, In a moment he shall die. Of time no man knows the worth. This is a descriptive sketch of time. Well hath the poet said,

" On all important time, through every age,
Though much, and warm, the wise
have urg'd ; the man
Is yet unborn, who duly weighs an hour."†

BUT what is it to redeem time ? To redeem is to recover, or ransom by paying a price, or by extraordinary exertions and diligence. The term is metaphorical, alluding to merchants, who watch all opportunities for commerce ; deny themselves sleep, ease and pleasure, and spare no pains to get gain. Sometimes it means, the making up of lost time, by uncommon activity and diligence afterwards. At other times it implies extraordinary exertion and double diligence, by which as much is accomplished in one day or year, as otherwise would have been done in two days or years ; by which one half of the time is redeemed for some other employment. In either of these views, it implies a careful avoiding of all mispense of time, and employing the whole of it, with activity and diligence, for the best purposes.

PARTICULARLY it implies a studious recovering it from all unnecessary sleep and drowsiness ; from sloth, idleness, ease, pastimes, and sensual pleasures ; from gaming and all unlawful diversions, exercises and employments. It implies the most cautious guarding against all mispense of time. It implies some proper sense of

* Job vii. 1. † Chap. xiv. 5.

† Night Thoughts, p. 18.

the inestimable worth of time, of our obligations to redeem it, and of the immense importance of it to ourselves and others. This enters so deeply into the idea of redeeming time, that without it no person will be engaged in this momentous employment.

REDEEMING time, implies recovering it from impenitence, unbelief, ungodliness and a state of sin. Let men be ever so busily employed even to the eleventh hour in the affairs of the world, and yet neglect God and their souls, they have been idle, and have done nothing for which time was given them. Our Saviour addresses all persons of this character, in this reprehensive language: Why stand ye here all the day idle? Time is not redeemed until we employ it for good purposes, to right ends and with right views. The great and principal thing, nay, the very first thing is, *To seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.**

REDEEMING time, implies not only the employing it for right ends, but that we be active, diligent and persevering in all branches of duty: that we double our diligence, and do all that we can, in the short, uncertain day, which is appointed to us. Our great Master commands, *Strive*, or as it might be rendered, *be in an agony to enter in at the strait gate.*† Further it is written, *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.*‡ The gospel forbids all sloth, and demands constant activity and diligence. *Not slothful in busi-*

ness, fervent in spirit serving the Lord.§

FURTHER, redeeming time comprises in it, a diligent attendance on all instituted means of religion; secret, private and ejaculatory prayer, the public worship and ordinances; searching the scriptures, and self examination. God, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, has appointed these, to assist us in redeeming time, and in applying it to the noblest purposes; and it cannot be done without a serious, diligent and persevering attention to them.

ANOTHER thing of great consideration in the redeeming and right improvement of time, is watching and improving favorable seasons and opportunities, such as the days of youth, times of special awakening, when the spirit of God is striving with us and others: Times of peculiar light, and more than ordinary means of instruction: Times of great mercy, or affliction. By observing and improving these men redeem time to infinite advantage. More is done for them, and the glory of God, in a short time, than is done in many years, at other times. By not observing, and neglecting them all is lost. The Israelites in the wilderness, by not improving their opportunity, came short of the rest promised in Canaan, and fell in the desert. The Jews had their day, but by not discerning the signs of the times, and not knowing the things which belonged to their peace, lost their city, temple, nation, and even their souls. They brought wrath upon themselves to the uttermost.

In a word, time may be still further redeemed by a serious and pious attention to the events, sud-

* Matth. vi. 33.

† Luke xiii. 24.

‡ Eccles. ix. 10.

§ Rom. xii. 11.

den changes and revolutions in the world and in the church. These wonderful works of God, teach us his power, wisdom, truth and faithfulness; his great goodness and mercy. His glorious character is brought to view in them. *The Lord is known by the judgments which he executeth.* By his marvellous works of mercy and judgment, he fills the earth with his glory.* The contemplation of them affords great instruction, consolation, and ground of confidence in God. They afford profitable admonition, beget reverence and adoring ideas of the divine majesty. They exhibit such a wonderful accomplishment of prophecies and divine promises, as is most happily adapted to the confirmation of our faith in the word and promises of God. They have been written therefore for our learning, admonition and comfort, on whom the ends of the world are come.† The Psalmist therefore resolved, *I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy works.*‡ The events of our times are full of instruction. The signs of them are important, and point us to the dangers and duties of our particular day. We can therefore, by no means, redeem time to the best advantage, without a pious observation of present events and aspects. This is necessary that we may praise God for mercies, and humble ourselves under his frowns.

THE exceedingly sudden and awful changes which time is making in individuals, in families, and in the world; men's dying in a

moment, dying in that very night, when they are saying peace and safety; soul take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; dying in full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet, when their breasts are full of milk and their bones moistened with marrow, are exceedingly calculated to impress the mind with a sense of the worth of time, of the uncertainty of it, of the importance of improving each moment, and to stimulate us to redeem time with all our might. *Who is wise, and he shall understand these things, prudent and he shall know them?*§ We may therefore manifest our wisdom and redeem time, by contemplating the events of the last year.

WHILE we cast our eyes upon Europe and the old world, how do we witness a change in the whole state and appearance of the nations, since the commencement of the last year! Then peace, with her olive branch, seemed to have composed Europe and the world. But now the appearance is that of disorder, tumult, rapine and horrid wars. The state of Europe, and of other parts of the old world, is such as portends the most momentous events. The Turkish empire, enervated in its government, and torn with intestine animosities and wars, seems to be verging towards a dissolution. Arabia appears to be in a convulsed state. China has been suffering all the horrors of civil war. The insurgents have carried war even to the gates of the imperial city. The emperor has been obliged to wield his sword in defence of his person and family. In Egypt the Mamelukes have been represented as in a state of rebellion.

* Numbers xiv. 21.

† Rom. xv. 4. and 1. Cor. x. 11.

‡ Psalm lxxvii. 11. 12.

§ Hosea xiv. 9.

IN Europe war has again hung out the bloody flag. The almost incredible preparations of the First Consul of France for the invasion and conquest of Great Britain, and her exertions to ward off the impending blow, and to annoy her enemy, attract the attention of Europe and of the whole world.

THIS state of hostility is deeply to be regretted, not only as it opens the sluices of human blood and fills countries with widows and orphans; but as it is destructive to morals, and productive of the worst tempers, and most horrid crimes. It is also injurious to literature, commerce, and all the arts of peace; and obstructs the propagation of the gospel. Pious people will deprecate it, as it has dashed the pleasing prospect, which appeared to be opening, at the return of peace, for the extensive spread of the protestant religion in France and Italy. They will lament on the account of the oppression and trials of their Christian brethren, in those countries, where the war prevails. They will sympathize with them, and cease not to pray for them, that they may be kept in the hour of temptation: That their faith may not fail, and that they may abide continually under the shadow of the Almighty.

WHILE we contemplate the tumult of the nations, and the awful crisis with respect to Europe, let this be our consolation, That the Lord reigneth: That the wrath of man shall praise him; and that the remainder of wrath he will restrain: That he taketh the wise in their own craftiness; and that those who walk in pride, he is able to abase. Let us importunately pray in the language of the prophet Habakkuk, when, in vision, he saw the wreck of na-

tions, *Lord revive thy work.* Let what will be the fate of nations, plead thine own cause, enlarge and establish thine own kingdom, the mount Zion which thou hast loved.

IN the West Indies, war, with its utmost horrors, has raged, in consequence of which there have been many great and important alterations with regard to those Islands.

AMIDST this conflict of nations, these United States have enjoyed peace, plenty, and the amplest privileges, civil and religious, of which any people could ever boast. Our navigation, commerce, fisheries, husbandry, settlements, numbers and resources have been constantly increasing.

WITH respect to religion, from the accounts which have been received from Europe, it appears that the missionary spirit continues, and that great exertions are made in Great Britain, Germany, and some other parts, to diffuse Christian knowledge among their own people, and to communicate the blessings of civilization and the gospel to the Heathen. In Great Britain, it appears, that on the whole Christian knowledge, orthodoxy, experimental preaching and religion are increasing.

To some churches, in the United States, the last year has been a year of refreshing. The happy effects of the late revivals in others are abundantly manifest, in the increase of their numbers, zeal, spiritual life, peace, order and beauty. From several reports which have been exhibited relative to the general state of the churches, in the United States, it appears, that they have not, for many years, been in a more flourishing condition.

IN Connecticut, the state of our College, of our schools and of literature in general, is very flattering; tho' the College has sustained a great loss in the death of Mr. Ebenezer G. Marsh, Senior Tutor, and Professor elect of Languages and Ecclesiastical History. Though sore and mortal sickness has ravaged some of the principal towns and cities in our sister States; and though it has been a year of more than common mortality in general, yet in this State, with the exception of a few towns, the inhabitants have enjoyed health and a great degree of prosperity. The lives, health and usefulness of our governor, lieutenant-governor, and council, of the judges of our courts, and of our senators and representatives in the national legislature, have been preserved. Three of the clergy only, and these venerable for length of days, as well as usefulness, have finished their course since the commencement of the last year.* While the years of others have been numbered and finished, yet we, through help obtained from God, continue unto the present time. Though unworthy of the least of all the mercy and all the truth which he hath shewed unto his servants, yet he hath loaded us with his benefits. In view of these national, domestic and personal mercies, how

* The Rev. Daniel Farrand, pastor of the first church in Canaan; who died March 28th, in the 84th year of his age, and 51st of his ministry. The Rev. Eleazer May, pastor of the church in Haddam; who died April 14th, in the 71st year of his age, and 46th of his ministry. The Rev. Eliphalet Williams, D. D. pastor of the first church in East-Hartford; who died June 29th, in the 77th year of his age, and 36th of his ministry.

should our hearts glow with gratitude and love! and with what joyful lips should we show forth the praises of our great Benefactor! How should we praise him in lives of all holy obedience; and be zealously and constantly redeeming the time for the noble purpose of glorifying him, both in our bodies and in our spirits which are his! Let us realize, that in proportion to the number and greatness of our privileges and of his mercies, are our obligations to serve and glorify him.

GREAT is the occasion which we, the editors of this Magazine, have to rejoice, and ascribe all glory and thanksgiving to the Father of mercies, that we have all been spared another year, to our families, and to the people of our respective charges: That we may once more congratulate our readers on the commencement of a new year: That we may present you with a review of the events of the last, and call your attention to the preciousness and redemption of time. We intreat you to unite your thanksgiving with ours, for the mercies we have mutually received, and to strive together in your prayers to God for us, that while we live, we may redeem the time, employing the precarious moments which remain, with activity, diligence and perseverance, for the happiest purposes for ourselves, for you, and for the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ.

WHILE we thank you for the candor with which you have received, and the generosity with which you have so long supported this Magazine, our prayer to God for you is, that his eye might be upon you, your families and connections for good, from the be-

ginning of the year unto its end. That the light of his candle may shine upon your tabernacles, and that the light of his countenance, and of the knowledge of his glory may shine in upon your souls: That you may grow in knowledge, in grace, in comfort, in usefulness, and in every amiable attainment, until you shall be perfected in holiness, and receive the end of your faith, the eternal salvation of your souls.

THAT we may succeed in our prayers for you, and that you may be eternally distinguished for the lustre of your crown, and the greatness of your reward, allow us, with the greatest earnestness, and the most solemn considerations, to press the apostolic exhortation. *That ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise redeeming the time.*

To quicken ourselves and you to this momentous duty, let us most seriously examine ourselves, how we have employed our time, in years past, and the last year in particular. Have we redeemed it from drowsiness, sloth, indolence, pastimes, idleness, evil company, wicked courses and every kind of misimprovement? How have we redeemed it on the Sabbath, from worldly pursuits and conversation, from every kind of profanation of its sacred hours, and for all the purposes of secret, private and public worship, and all the purposes of spiritual improvement? Have we redeemed time to attend all the ordinances of Christ, and instituted means of grace and spiritual improvement? Have we done all for our souls, our families, the church of God and mankind, which our hand hath found to do, with all our might? Have we so observed the events and signs of the times as to

walk with God in them, praising him for his mercies, humbling ourselves under his judgments, learning the worth, shortness and uncertainty of time; stimulating us to greater and greater activity and diligence in redeeming it? Have we employed it for God, with right views and right ends? Or have we stood idle all the day? Where is the man who has not been greatly deficient in these respects? Who will not find himself guilty and reproved by this view of time and its redemption? And how should a consideration of all loss and misimprovement of time awaken us to the utmost activity and diligence in redeeming the fleeting moments which remain?

A CONSIDERATION of the goodness of God, and especially of his goodness to us in particular, that when he divided to the sons of Adam the bounds of their habitation, and the various periods of time, in which they should exist, he appointed this great and good land, a land of health and plenty, a land of such glorious light, liberty and privileges unto our forefathers and unto us, should engage us to redeem all our time for his service and glory. That it is so far removed from the broils, works, evil customs and vices of the old world; so happily situated for navigation, commerce, independence, and all the arts of peace; that God by the most merciful and wonderful exertions of his providence preserved it for us, and made us an independent nation, possessed of such distinguishing privileges, increases our obligations. That we were born and educated in such a period of time, not in the ages of the old world, not in the dark ages, which intervened between the

general deluge and the giving of the law, not under the Mosaic, but under the more mild and glorious dispensation of the gospel; not in the dark places of the earth, where the people perish for lack of vision; but in those happy regions, where the Sun of Righteousness hath arisen with healing in his wings, beyond all calculation, obliges us to redeem the time. That he, in whose hands all our times are, hath given us so much health of countenance and so much length of days, with all his love in Christ Jesus, binds us indispensibly to redeem all our time for him.

SHOULD not a consideration of the commands of God to redeem the time, *not to be slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises*, awaken us to this duty? Should not the doom of the slothful servant rouse all to activity and diligence? Who can endure the thought of being cast into outer darkness?

How should contemplations on the immense guilt of not redeeming time, of misimproving Sabbaths and opportunities for spiritual improvement, and to instruct and do good to our families, to mankind, and the church of God, awaken us to all possible exertion and diligence in our duty? To misimprove time, standing all the day idle, is to abuse all the goodness of God, and rob him of all the honor and service we owe to him. It is to rob our families, mankind and ourselves! Nay, it is suicide, the murder and total destruction of ourselves! The improvement of an hour for God may give us more honor and happiness than all the human race do now, or ever have enjoyed. The loss of an hour may sink an un-

happy creature in everlasting shame and punishment. Hours, those short portions of time, are worth more than crowns, empires and worlds. Well has the poet sung,

..... "Throw years away!
Throw empires, and be blameless.
Moments seize.
Heaven's on the wing: a moment
we may wish,
When worlds want wealth to buy."

Who is not astonished at the guilt and madness of trifling with time? Who can contemplate them, and not be excited to improve it with all his might?

How should public teachers, parents, masters, all who instruct, all who love God and human nature, teach those under their care, and all with whom they have influence, the duty of redeeming time?

In a word, we are constrained upon a subject so solemn, so highly interesting to yourselves, and to civil and religious society, to beseech you to hear our friendly exhortations. Not only weigh the motives already set before you, but consider further, That the time is short: That God hath made your life as an hand breadth, and your age as nothing before him: That with many of you, a great proportion of this span is already gone: That every year and hour your span is shortening: That another year is now gone: That it hath flown away with an almost incredible and imperceivable rapidity: That we are now entered upon a new year, of the events of which we have no knowledge. Another year may wholly change our prospects. It may be a year of great distress and sorrow with you, as it has been with many the year past. Your families may be made desolate. Lov-

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er and friend may be put far from you, and your acquaintance into darkness. It may be that this year you will die, and that it may be in a few days. That this night your souls may be required of you. Nay, that in a moment ye may die. Then your day of probation will be ended. Ye will go to judgment. All before you will be a boundless eternity; an eternity of happiness or misery, according as ye have redeemed or wasted your time. Know, we intreat you, that all your zeal, love to God and men, your usefulness, and good improvement of each hour, will sweeten and dignify your endless existence, display the divine glories, and add to the perfection, dignity and blessedness of his redeemed kingdom. Oh, may these views and motives duly impress your hearts, and influence your lives. This will make you wise, useful and honorable while you live: It will give you comfort in the review of every year and day: It will constantly increase your treasures in heaven; give peace on the bed of death, and exalt you to a distinguished place among the blessed and glorious forever. AMEN.

MESS'RS EDITORS,

THE following Letter and Dialogues on some of the leading doctrines of Christianity, are submitted to your inspection, to be published in your useful Magazine, if you think proper.

DEAR FRIEND,

IN consequence of the several interviews we have had on religious subjects, I have taken the liberty to give you my ideas generally, in the character of John, in several dialogues between James

and John. I have endeavoured to give every argument and objection, that I was capable of finding (and that the short work would comprize) on both sides, its full weight. You will readily see I have avoided a strict method, and have endeavoured to make it conform to arguments naturally arising in conversation.—I beg you would receive it as a token of love and friendship, and pardon every error that may have arisen in consequence of ignorance or prejudice—and after a candid examination, your ideas communicated in your own way, will be highly gratifying to your friend, whose prayer is, that we may be led into all necessary truth, and cordially unite in the fundamental doctrines of the gospel.—I am, sir, with esteem, your friend and humble servant,

EVANDER.

DIALOGUE I.

James.

IT gives me many unhappy feelings, my good friend, to think you have embraced such principles of religion—which I conceive contrary to the benevolence of the Deity, and if preached, I think must have a very unhappy effect on society.

John. I will assure you on my part it is a source of grief that we disagree in the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, while we so cordially unite in other matters.

James. It appears to me if we lay aside all party prejudice, and follow reason and revelation, and carefully examine the subject, you will be convinced of your error and receive the true principles of religion.

John. Religious disputes generally prove unprofitable, by be-

ing carried on from wrong motives, and each by contending for mastery in argument, loses the search of truth, which should be the only object of pursuit; it is frequent for disputants to have recourse to unfair means, which create acrimony that ends in anger and dissatisfaction.

James. I am very sensible of the truth of your remarks, and for the same reason, generally avoid every thing that leads to religious controversy. But we being well acquainted with each other's temper, and apprised of this general error, can take up the subject, and canvass it, coolly and fairly.

John. If we can agree to take the word of God for our guide, and examine the subject with an humble aim, to find and embrace the truth, throwing the idea of victory and the establishment of a favorite theory out of the question, I will with all my heart undertake.

James. Under these impressions, if you please, we will engage, and whenever we find ourselves on weak ground, we will generously give up the point, and acknowledge our error.

John. I think it expedient in the first place, to lay down some general points, in which we both agree, as a standard by which to try our arguments.

James. I conceive it proper.

John. I suppose we both agree in the truth and divine authority of the scriptures?

James. These we may take as an unerring guide.

John. Shall we take the present translation as generally a good one, and quote it accordingly?

James. I think it prudent, as the translators undoubtedly were better qualified for translating than we are ourselves.

John. I trust we are agreed in

the great point of the being and perfections of God?

James. I presume we are.

John. You believe him self-existent, independent, eternal and unchangeable in his being; infinite in knowledge, almighty in power, perfectly good in his nature, possessing every attribute and perfection that can render him lovely and amiable, in the eyes of holy beings?

James. Yes, I think it is undeniably taught in revelation; and I suppose you will agree, that every argument which perfectly comports with God's perfections must be of weight, and of course every argument that does not, must be fallacious.

John. I fully agree that every argument drawn from God's perfections must be true, and every thing that does not harmonize with these must be false; I presume you will further agree, that every thing which comports with the general tenor of the scriptures, should be believed, even if it is above our comprehension. For instance, when scripture saith, "there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one"—again, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost"—which passages represent God's existing in a trinity of persons, and in essence but one, the fact we are bound to believe though the manner of the existence is above our comprehension.

James. To this I agree, and every other point that is clearly revealed, by comparing scripture with scripture.

John. The way is now prepared to enter on the subject.

James. How can you, consistently with reason and revelation,

reconcile God's perfections with the total depravity of all mankind by nature, which renders them unable to perform any good act? Or believe that he should command them to do good, and then eternally punish them for disobedience, when they have no power to obey? Or that he should finally determine to regenerate a certain number with his irresistible grace, let them do what they will, and make them heirs of glory; and determine the rest of mankind shall eternally perish, let their works be what they may?

John. I readily answer I cannot agreeably to your statement. —I perceive you have obtained a very unjust idea of those doctrines; and have a wrong notion of the nature of moral depravity, and in what it consists. I fully believe in the total depravity of human nature, the absolute sovereignty of God, his final determination of all events in the ages of eternity, and the necessity of the special agency of the Holy Ghost, for salvation; but by no means in the manner you have described. I would inquire of you, previously to entering into particulars, what is your opinion of the moral state of man by nature?

James. I believe mankind moral agents, capable of choosing good or evil, and by nature possessing both virtuous and vicious principles, which is partial depravity. If they are persuaded, by virtuous examples and arguments, to shun vice and cherish virtue, they will progressively conquer all their evil passions and propensities, and in *principle* become virtuous.

John. I would inquire if you do not conceive total depravity to imply natural inability?

James. I can view it in no other sense but inability.

John. Total depravity as I conceive, consists in an evil taste altogether, and does in no way infringe on the natural faculties, so as to produce an inability for free, spontaneous, voluntary exercises; but leaves men free to perform actions, praise, or blame worthy, and in no sense infringes on moral agency.—It consists in being entirely destitute of holiness, and possessing a spirit of supreme selfishness.

James. In what do you conceive true holiness to consist?

John. It consists in a supreme aim for the glory of God, arising from love to his essential nature, and in universal benevolence to beings in general; and every act that arises from a principle entirely destitute of holiness, has no moral goodness, notwithstanding the act itself may be good.

James. I wish to be informed how an act can be good, and have no goodness in it, at the same time? To me it appears a contradiction.

John. Moral goodness consists alone in holy and benevolent exercises of the heart; it does not consist in the external act, but in the *heart*, from whence the act flows. Suppose I am determined, from malice premeditated, to take your life; and to accomplish my design, I propose that we should go a hunting, determining when a convenient time and place present, to shoot you; the convenient place presents, and I fire at your heart—but by divine direction the shot misses you and kills a tiger, which was ready to leap, and would have devoured you, if I had not fired and killed him. In this case in attempting to destroy your life, I save it. I pre-

same you will not contend I did a morally good act, notwithstanding the effect was good, but on the contrary, that I in *heart* was a murderer.

James. I acknowledge that I have been accustomed to view the subject a little differently; but this does by no means prove that mankind are all entirely destitute by nature of benevolence; for I have seen persons who professed no religion, possess almost unbounded benevolence. They would give a beggar the only dollar they had; they would attend the sick, feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, even if they went hungry and cold themselves; and were ready to do good to their fellow creatures, where there was not the least prospect of reward—and at the same time, they were jovial companions. I think benevolence consists in giving without expectation of receiving.

John. Mankind possess the natural affections of love, sympathy, pity, grief, joy, &c. in the exercise of which God frequently makes them instrumental of doing good to his people and church; tho' they have not the least aim at his glory, nor do it, in obedience to his commands. I very much differ from you in the idea of true benevolence. As I conceive, it is the genuine exercise of a holy heart. What you call benevolence, I call humanity, which is common to most men—and when a person is actuated by no higher motive than sympathy, pity and humanity, he is no more morally praise worthy, than the *brasses* are, which attempt to relieve each other in distress, and which is common even to swine.

James. I am surprised you think sympathy, pity and humanity are not good!

John. They are good abstractly considered, and when properly regulated, have a very good tendency on society, and a person destitute of them, appears more *cruel* than the beasts.

James. I ask then, if persons are not praise worthy for exercising them?

John. If they exercise them under the influence of wisdom, and benevolence, they are; but if they exercise them under the influence of natural affections only, they are not. Though they give all their goods to feed the poor, and their bodies to be burned, without charity they are nothing. —If a parent has an incorrigible child, who is disobedient, steals, fights, swears, &c. if he esteem it cruel and inhuman, to whip the child, and says, reason and arguments will have a better effect, although they have hitherto proved ineffectual, he is very blame worthy. For the wise man has said, "Thou shalt beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell." And all actions, which arise from natural affections only, without being regulated by *true* benevolence, are blame worthy; even relieving the poor, and distressed; for they either originate in a desire to gratify the natural feelings, or to receive profit, or honor; and they have no aim at God's glory, neither are they done in humble obedience.

James. Does it not follow then, that such persons should refrain from giving to the poor and distressed, as they become blame worthy, which is sin agreeable to your arguments?

John. I think it does by no means, as it is their indispensable duty to relieve the poor and distressed; and it is equally their duty to perform such actions, in obe-

dience to God's commands, and from benevolent motives; and they become more blame worthy in the omission than in the performance of them, even from natural affections.

James. Do you believe that any are ever actuated by motives perfectly void of selfishness?

John. I believe that all who have been "created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works," exercise universal benevolence, and so far as they have the Christian spirit, regard themselves, no more than their real worth in the scale of intelligent existence.

James. How can you determine that mankind do not by nature possess some degree of this benevolence?

John. I think we have reason and experience to shew that mankind are naturally selfish altogether; but as it is impossible we should have perfect knowledge of another's heart, I think it prudent to look at the sure word of Him, who knows the inmost recesses of every heart, and if He has plainly declared it, we are in duty bound to believe, and feel very humble before Him—that we possess hard hearts of unbelief.

James. I acknowledge, reason, experience and revelation, plainly show, that mankind are naturally selfish and wicked, but deny they are totally so, for I believe they have *ability* to do good, as well as evil.

John. I fully agree with you as to the *ability* mankind possess—but it is not *ability* that we are talking about, but moral taste or disposition.—Do you believe that all mankind are alike by nature?

James. I do; they must be possessed of propensities which are good and evil, or altogether evil—for it is evident they are not altogether good.

John. Then if scripture plainly represents any to be totally evil from their birth up, it will be sufficient proof of universal depravity?

James. If it is plainly declared, I will give up the point.

John. That mankind are totally depraved, is evident from their history, from Adam to the present day. Blood, cruelty, revenge, idolatry, tyranny, debauchery, ungodliness—with all the long catalogue of vices, have continually stained its pages. Infants give evidence of total selfishness; as soon as they are capable of action, they incline to possess every thing that comes within their grasp; they show anger and revenge in meeting the least repulse, and this temper constantly increases with time. It thinks all around it, is made to subserve its interest, and pleasure, until taught the contrary by painful experience.—It is farther evident from every idea we have of justice, that mankind possess a criminal nature independent of actual transgression. We can conceive of no way wherein it can be compatible with justice to inflict the least possible degree of pain, or punishment, on a perfectly pure, innocent, accountable being—neither can we believe it just to inflict punishment for another's crime. Benevolence might undertake, but justice could not require it. And God himself says, "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father," but "the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Again: "Who ever perished being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?" Says Abraham, "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? that be far from thee; shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"—If the Judge of all

the earth does right, then it follows that infants have criminal propensities, or they would not suffer pain, sickness, and death, neither would there be propriety in baptizing them for remission of sins.—Nature and revelation plainly teach, that every thing produces after its kind. After Adam became a sinner, the scriptures say he begat children in his own likeness, which if he did, they must be shapen in iniquity. It is proper, that every thing should be treated according to its nature. We treat (and with propriety) poisonous serpents and harmless doves differently, though neither have done actual harm, to our knowledge. But scripture saith, that “The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they be born”—they are said to be “by nature children of wrath.” Again: they are represented carnally minded, sold under sin, &c.—“the carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to his law nor indeed can be.” Again: “You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.” It is evident these were without spiritual life, and if they were, it follows they were totally depraved—they are said to be deaf and blind in a moral sense. “Hear ye deaf, look ye blind”—“bring forth the blind that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.” The representation of having eyes and ears, and still being deaf and blind, implies the possession of ability, but the want of a will to exercise it. Again: “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life.”—Mankind are represented altogether sinful, without the least degree of goodness, and that continually. “For the imagination of man’s heart is

evil from his youth”—“and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually.”—Here scripture is conclusive, and it is impossible to evade it, as it extends to every imagination of the thoughts, and that continually; if this representation is just, then there were men from their youth up, altogether evil; if it proves anything, it proves them destitute of holiness, and of course totally depraved.—Says the Psalmist, “Behold I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me.” The apostle affirms, “They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no, not one; their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they have used deceit, the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood, destruction and misery are in their way, and the way of peace they have not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes.” If there is no fear of God before their eyes, it is evident there is no goodness in them, for “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” says the Psalmist.—But let scripture be ever so much wrested from its true meaning, I think it is impossible to evade the idea of two distinct characters being held up to view throughout the holy volume; which are distinguished sometimes by the holy and unholy, righteous and unrighteous, just and unjust, children of light and children of darkness, and a variety of other phrases. If mankind by nature possess the least degree of holiness, there is the utmost impropriety in keeping up an entire distinction of characters, unless the holy are free from sin; but the

Scriptures are exprefs on the fubject ; “ he that fays he is without fin deceiveth himfelf, and the truth is not in him.” If you attempt to describe a finner poffeffed of the leaft degree of moral goodnefs, you describe a faint ; for he that hath the fpirit of Chrift, “ is born of God.” Then it follows, if mankind naturally poffefs moral goodnefs, all the diftinction that can in any reafon be kept up, will be comparative degrees of goodnefs and evil—as more good, lefs good, more evil, lefs evil, &c.—but we find no fcripture to warrant fuch ideas. If this ftatement is juft, then total depravity is undeniably taught in fcripture, and we in duty are bound to believe it.

James. I acknowledge the evidence appears conclufive, if two objections can be removed.

John. What are they ?

James. Whenever I read the Bible I have a criterion by which to try my underftanding. If I conceive a doctrine taught, I then weigh it by the ftandard of God’s perfeftions, and if it does not agree with them, I then conclude I do not underftand it, and give up the doctrine, and reft contented, that the fcripture on that point is above my comprehension ; and for God to create beings totally depraved, I think is inconfiftent with his wifdom and benevolence. That is one objection : The fecond is, it gives a degrading idea of God’s works, and of human nature.

John. I conceive mankind poorly able in every inftance, to determine, what is, and what is not, confiftent with God’s perfeftions ; as it is impoffible for them by fearching “ to find out the Almighty to perfeftion” ; and “ the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,” and he is prone to think God to

be altogether fuch an one as himfelf ; but his ways are not our ways. You fay it gives a degrading idea of God’s works. In the firft inftance God created man upright, but he has fought out many inventions. But I fhall not deny that it is degrading to human nature, for I conceive it the moft foul humbling doctrine of the gofpel. It brings creatures to the very footftool of fovereign mercy, and makes them loath themfelves and repent in duft and afhes.—I wifh you would point out wherein total depravity is inconfiftent with the benevolence of the Deity.

James. If we are by nature totally depraved, we are excufable ; for we are not to blame for what is natural to us ; and it is inconfiftent to punifh beings for what they cannot help. If we are totally depraved, it will destroy moral agency, from which it will follow, that we do not aft, but are acted upon like machines.

John. I perceive you ftill have a very unjuft idea of total depravity. It is not like our natural features, which it is impoffible to alter ; but it confifts in a heart unwilling to perform reafonable duties, which are as much within its power, as the common aftions of life, and it in no way infringes on moral agency fo as to produce an inability to obey any of God’s commands.—But admitting your ideas juft, it does not follow that it is inconfiftent with God’s perfeftions—for God requires no beings to love and obey him beyond their power. If total depravity destroys our ability to love and obey him, then we are not bound to it, by his own command ; for he requires us thus to do with all the abilities we poffefs, and no more—and requires no more than we are capable of performing.—You hold

that mankind are partly depraved. If total depravity destroys moral agency, and clears from blame—then as far as beings are depraved, so far they are excusable by the same argument; and as all sin flows from what depravity beings possess, they are blameless for all sin, and sin will cease to be sin; which argument if just will extend to all sinful beings, and render them as innocent as the angels of light. If you have a son, addicted to intemperance, and you inform him of the awful consequences in time and eternity, and forbid him on pain of punishment using spirituous liquors, and he still retains his propensity and indulges freely, in full defiance of your orders, which proves his final ruin; I ask if your disobedient, intemperate son, was not blame worthy? notwithstanding he possessed a strong propensity; or if a thief is excusable because he inclines to steal, or if a child is clear from blame, because he possesses a spirit of disobedience? I think you will readily answer they are all blame worthy for their evil propensities, which if true will make all mankind blame worthy for their depravity. If beings are not accountable, nor praise nor blame-worthy for their moral tastes, then it follows, that the angels in heaven are not holy, nor praise worthy, because they naturally have a holy taste—which will destroy their being moral agents agreeable to your arguments; which is very absurd.

James. I acknowledge that I had received wrong impressions of your ideas of total depravity. I ever supposed you held it in a sense, which if true the destruction of moral agency would inevitably follow. I now see propriety in God's commanding men to obey

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him, when they possess ability too, as much as they do to perform common actions, though their inclination is altogether to disobey.

John. The great difficulty with you, and many other honest persons, on this point, has arisen from general misrepresentation of our ideas. It has been represented that we hold that total depravity renders mankind unable to do any thing; which, if true, would render them unable to perform the common actions of life; in consequence of which a universal prejudice has arisen against the doctrine. It is a very alarming doctrine to every natural man, as it renders him altogether unholy. Without holiness no one can see the Lord in peace, is scripture language.

James. I have other objections to make to your general system of doctrines, but as our time is now elapsed, I will defer them till we meet again.

John. It will give me pleasure to renew the conversation as soon as an opportunity shall present.

(End of Dialogue I.)

An explanation of the prophecy of Daniel.

(Continued from page 216.)

NUMBER III.

Daniel's vision of the ram and he goat, Chap. viii. 1—12.

THE great revolutions and events to be effected in divine providence, from the time of the prophet, to the end of the world, having been exhibited in the preceding vision, the spirit of prophecy proceeds in this more minutely to detail those events which next succeeded that period. As God had numbered, and al-

I i

most finished, the kingdom of Babylon, no further notice is taken of it in prophetic visions, but that which immediately succeeded it, is the subject of particular attention. This is introduced in the following manner. *I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, says the prophet, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high, but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great.* The interpretation of this part of the vision, by the angel, enables us to give a decided explanation of it. This ram prefigured the empire of the Medes and Persians, v. 20. The two horns typified the two kingdoms of which this empire did consist; horns in scripture being the emblem of power and conquest, 1 Kings xxii. 11. *And Zedekiah, the son of Cheneanah, made him horns of iron; and he said, Thus saith the Lord, with these thou shalt push the Syrians till thou hast consumed them. One horn was higher than the other. One nation, the Persian, became more powerful and famous than the other, the Median; and the higher, the Persian, came up last.* For Media had been a potent and formidable kingdom, when Persia was only an inferior province, and tributary even to Media itself; but the two kingdoms being united in Cyrus, a Persian, and the kings being in the Persian line, the Persian part of the empire became more powerful and famous than the Median, and hath given denomination to the empire ever since. Daniel had

this vision in the palace at Shushan, which was situated by the river *Ulai, in the province of Elam, or Persia*; and he *saw the ram come up out of the river, and he saw the ram pushing westward, for Persia is the most eastern kingdom of which the scriptures take notice. He saw the ram, pushing westward, and northward, and southward.* He saw Cyrus and the Persian kings, conquering Babylon, Syria, and the lesser Asia on the west; Armenia and the adjacent kingdoms on the north; and Egypt on the south. And none of these beasts or kingdoms, could stand before him, nor could any save them from his victorious arm. *But he did according to his will, conquering and governing with an uncontrollable power; and became great, establishing an extensive and powerful empire.* The prophet proceeds, *And as I was considering, meditating and inquiring with myself what might be the import of the vision, behold, to my surprise, an he goat came from the west.* This he goat typified the Macedonian empire, or the kingdom of the Greeks, founded by Alexander the great; the notable horn between his eyes, v. 21. represented the first royal family; this he goat *came from the west, for Macedonia and Greece, were situated on the eastern part of Europe, opposite to the western coast of Asia. From this region came the he goat, on the face of the whole earth, like a mighty torrent, prostrating all before him, and he touched not the ground, by the rapidity of his conquests, being more like a bird which flew, than a beast which walked or ran. And he came close to the ram—and he ran unto him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close to the ram, and he was moved with choler against him,*

and smote the ram, and brake his two horns; neither was there power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground and stamped upon him, and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand.—The kings of Persia, Darius and Xerxes, made mighty efforts to subdue the states of Greece. They overran Macedonia and part of Greece, practising great cruelty upon the inhabitants wherever they came; but were finally repelled by the valor of the Greeks. The insults and injuries which they had realized, exceedingly exasperated the Grecians against the Persians, and they resolved on a Persian war in the way of retaliation and revenge. Such was the occasion of that choler and fury against the ram, which characterises the he goat. The Greeks having raised their forces, chose Alexander generalissimo of their army, and this part of the vision relates immediately to the contests between Alexander, the first Macedonian king, and Darius Codomanus, the last Persian emperor, by which the empire of the Macedonians was founded, and that of the Persians destroyed. Permit a paraphrase including the capital events contained in this vision by way of explanation.

And as I was considering the prowess and conquests of the ram, the Persians, to my surprise I saw an he goat, the Macedonians, in deep resentment coming forth to wage war upon the Persians, and Darius preparing to repel them. And I saw the he goat, Alexander, with his 35,000 Macedonians, come close to Darius, the ram, and his 180,000 Persians, and he smote Darius at the river *Granicus*. And while Darius raised another army, he divested him of all his provinces in the lesser Asia. And when

Darius returned with his 600,000 Persians, Alexander came close to him at the straits of *Iffus* in *Cilicia*, and put his vast army to flight. And while Darius, having in vain solicited for peace, exerted himself to repair his broken fortune, by raising another army, Alexander curtailed his empire, and extended his conquests, by taking from him Syria, Palestine, Phœnicia and Egypt; and then sought for Darius, and with his 50,000 men, came close to him, and smote his 110,000 Persians at *Arbela* in the plains of *Assyria*, and then took from him *Babylon* with his royal city *Persepolis*, his palace and his treasures! So the ram, Darius, could not stand before the he goat, Alexander, but he smote Darius, and brake his two horns, and cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him, by conquering and reducing his empire to the most abject state of submission.—Having thus seen the ram vanquished and smitten, perhaps a very concise account of him will not be disagreeable.

The Medes, one of the horns of the ram, were the descendants of *Madai* the son of *Japheth*, who planted himself on the east of the *Tigris*, over against *Assyria*, from whom the country was called *Media*, and in process of time became a powerful and formidable nation, experiencing the fortune of other nations, sometimes conquering, and at others being overcome, till they became a horn of the ram.—The Persians, the other horn, originally were called *Elamites*, and were the posterity of *Elam* the son of *Shem*, who settled himself on the east of the river *Tigris*, called in scripture, *Hiddekel*, opposite to *Chaldea* or *Babylon*. From him the country was called *Elam*. In the union of the two

kingdoms therefore the prophet saw the two arms of the image united in the breast. Particularly in Cyrus and the Persian kings, and in their conquests, he saw the ram with two horns, pushing westward, and northward, and southward, doing his will and becoming great, till he saw the he goat Alexander, come close to him and smite him, and brake his two horns and stamp upon him, Darius Codomanus, 208 years after the empire was founded in Cyrus and 330 years before the glorious appearance of the Son of God, as the Saviour of the world. —Permit the paraphrase to proceed.

The ram, Darius, being thus smitten, and his two horns broken, the Persian empire being thus dissolved, the *he goat* Alexander having conquered the nations of *India*, became very great, having extended and established the Macedonian empire from the *Adriatic* in Europe to the *Ganges* in Asia: *And when he was strong, the great horn between his eyes was broken.* First Alexander died of a fever in Babylon, and then his brother *Arideus*, called *Philip*, being placed on the throne in the minority of his sons, was put to death; then his son *Ægus*, and after him his son *Hercules*; and so the royal family being extinguished, the great horn between his eyes was broken: And the governors of the provinces, aspiring after independence and dominion, by their emulations, enmities and contests being destroyed, until they were reduced to four, they divided the empire between them. Cassander had Macedon and Greece, in the west; Lyfimachus had Thrace, Bithynia, &c. on the north; Ptolemy had Palestine, Egypt, &c. on the south; and Seleucus, Syria,

Babylon, &c. on the east; so, for the great horn, there *stood up four notable ones towards the four winds of heaven*, who governed their respective dominions with regal authority or power.

Thus far the scriptures themselves, illustrated by historical facts, furnish those aids which enable us to give a correct explanation of the preceding vision. But the subsequent parts, being involved in greater obscurity, have produced a diversity of expositions, and each being exhibited with a plausibility which invites assent, renders it difficult to give one a preference to the other, and constrains to moderation and diffidence in submitting opinions, or suggesting what is supposed to be the import of the vision. After exhibiting the expositions most generally adopted, each will choose for himself.

The great horn being broken in the death of Alexander and the extinction of the royal family; and four notable ones having come up for it, in the division of the empire into four kingdoms; the prophet saw, v. 9. *a little horn come forth from one of them, which waxed exceeding great toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. He saw it wax great toward the host of heaven, cast down some of the host and the stars to the ground, and stamp upon them. Yea, he saw him magnify himself even to the prince of the host, take away the daily sacrifice and cast down the place of the sanctuary. He saw an host given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression. He saw him cast the truth down to the ground, and practise and prosper.*—Very briefly. In this little horn, some very clearly see Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes, who became great with a

small people. They see him invading and plundering Egypt in the south—attacking the Jews in the pleasant land—rising and prophaning the temple, taking away the daily sacrifice, casting down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, displacing the public rulers, civil and religious—casting down the truth to the ground by suppressing the Jewish religion, destroying the copies of the law, and persecuting those who would not conform to the religion of the Greeks, with merciless severity, and lastly destroyed without hand, perishing by the righteous judgments of God.—Concerning this interpretation, however, would not a person, not very credulous, be disposed to inquire, why the prophet, in such a summary manner, should comprize the great events pertaining to the Persian and Macedonian empires, including the calamities of the Jews, contained in a term of almost 400 years, and yet be so particular in describing the persecution of Antiochus, which continued but three years and a half?—And how the answer, v. 14. that the vision should be for 2300 days, taken literally more than six years, can be accommodated to the persecution of Antiochus? or how this could be for many days? v. 26. And why the calamities brought upon his people by Antiochus, should so exceedingly affect the prophet, as to disqualify him for public service and make him sick certain days, v. 27. when he had witnessed, and they were now realizing, and he sustaining so much greater in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, the desolation of the land and the captivity of the nation by Nebuchadnezzar?—And a person disposed to convert opinions would say, that

to the application of this vision to Antiochus there were some obstinate objections, as

1. That it contains a real absurdity. He would say, that the coming forth of a little horn out of one of the four, made them five, as the springing up of a little horn among the ten, made them eleven. But if this be understood of Antiochus it makes no addition to their number—that as Antiochus, or the kingdom of Syria, was one of the four, to apply this to him, would make him come forth from himself.—He would say, 2. That this interpretation was not supported by fact. That the vision represents the little horn as waxing exceeding great towards the south. That though Antiochus several times invaded and plundered Egypt, yet he did not make an absolute conquest, so as to possess any part of it,—and was finally driven from it in a manner which very much chagrined and disgraced him.—*And toward the east*, but that Antiochus, or the kingdom of Syria, included all the eastern provinces in Alexander's empire, and he was so far from waxing exceeding great, or even extending them, in that direction, that they were rather curtailed and diminished, and that he was disgracefully repulsed and wounded in his attempt to plunder the temple in *Elymais*, in the east.—*And toward the pleasant land*: That though Antiochus harrassed, plundered and persecuted the Jews, yet his armies were finally repulsed by the Jews with great slaughter and disgrace, the temple purified and the worship of God restored, and even his treasures, the spoils of his armies, furnished the materials with which the utensils for the performance of divine service were constructed;

information of which being conveyed to him in his eastern expedition, produced that vexation and resentment which accelerated his death, and he left the kingdom in as distracted and impoverished a state as he found it. That tho' in some particulars it may agree with Antiochus, yet in general he stands in contrast with it.—Some consider this profanation of the temple and persecution of the Jews by Antiochus, as typical of the antichristian corruption and persecution.—Others apply it to the Romans. In the conquest of Greece and Macedon, they see the Romans coming forth in the kingdom of Cassander, as a little horn, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, or skilful in ruling, as the Romans were, and this in the latter time of the kingdom of the Greeks, v. 23, when the transgressions of the Jewish church were come to the full, in the degeneracy, venality and wickedness of the nation. They see the Romans from that western region, extending their conquests over Syria, Palestine and Egypt, so waxing exceeding great toward the south and toward the east and toward the pleasant land. They see them waxing great even to the host, and casting down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, destroying the Jews and displacing their public rulers. They see them magnify themselves even to the prince of the host, or the prince of princes, crucify the Lord of life and glory—and take away the daily sacrifice, dissolve the Jewish economy, cast down the place of the sanctuary, destroying the holy city and the temple. They see them cast the truth down to the ground and destroy the mighty and the holy people, first in the Jews and then

in the Christians, then by the emperors and now by the popes, and last of all they see the Romans broken and destroyed by the stone cut out of the mountain without hands.

The question was proposed, *How long shall be the vision, &c.?* and it was answered, *Unto 2300 days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.* So extensive is the term affixed for the continuation of this distressing and affecting scene, 2300 days, which prophetically computed are 2300 years. From what period to compute this term, it is very difficult to ascertain. If it will not correspond with the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus, must it not be referred to some other event? If it relates to the troubles of the Jews and their restoration to their own land, and of God's pure and holy worship among them; and to the persecution of the church, and its deliverance from antichristian corruption, which is to be expected about the same time, and about the year 2000, it is to be computed from about the division of the Macedonian empire between the four successful combatants for it, Cassander, Lyfimachus, Ptolemy and Seleucus. As there are no data given, and no period fixed from which we may compute, and as it will be most clearly ascertained from the completion of the vision, is it not our wisdom to submit it to divine providence for a demonstrative and satisfactory explanation?

Expositors have generally interpreted the representation of these kingdoms by savage beasts, to signify their ferocity, and cruelty in persecuting the people of God. But may not the justice of this interpretation be doubted? For, 1. The beasts were *diverse*

one from another. But is not the spirit of persecution uniformly and invariably the same spirit, in whatever nation or individual it exists? If it be, what need of a *diversity*, to represent it? But if to represent the various genius and character of these conquering and powerful kingdoms, how apt and striking the types? 2. Does this interpretation agree with the representation of scripture? The *bear*, the Persians, with an insatiable voracity attacked and subdued the *lion*, the Babylonians; and the Macedonians with the courage and fierceness of the *leopard*, attacked and conquered the bear; and the Romans combining the various nature of the lion, the bear, and the leopard, broke in pieces and devoured not only the Macedonians, and so virtually the Medes, Persians and Babylonians, *but the whole earth, as with great iron teeth*. And is it not assigned as the reason why this kingdom is represented by *iron*, that *as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things, so as iron that subdueth all these shall it break in pieces and shall trunse*? Is this kingdom represented by iron to denote its strength for persecution or conquest? If strong to break in pieces the preceding kingdoms, is not the idea of persecution foreign from the view of the scriptures? 3. Is this interpretation supported from fact? The people of God, the Jews, it is true suffered grievously from Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, but did he subdue and distress them as a persecutor, or as a conqueror? Did they suffer more from him than other conquered nations? If it be said, They did. Had they not given him peculiar and aggravated provocation? He took Jerusalem, made Jehoiakim king, and, exacting tribute of him, left

the city in peace. Jehoiakim rebelled against him. He came again, took the city, and made Mattaniah king, requiring him to swear by God that he would be true and faithful. And to remind him of this sacred obligation, changed his name and called him *Zedekiah, the oath of the Lord*. But Zedekiah was treacherous and rebelled against him. He came again, took the city and rased it, as a bad city, which made insurrection against kings. If they, therefore, suffered more from him than other nations, did they not procure this severity of treatment by their perfidy and rebellion? But after this did he distress them? Did they not dwell in peace in the cities of Chaldea? Did not Daniel sit in the gate of the king, as a distinguished favorite? and were not Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego promoted to offices of authority and influence in the province of Babylon? Did not Evilmerodach exalt the throne of Jehoiachin *above* the throne of the kings that were with him?—and did not Belshazzar so entirely consign the affairs of the empire to Daniel and his other officers, of state, that he did not know him when he came before him? Did he persecute the Jews?—Will Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, be produced as martyrs? but did not the edict by which they suffered equally extend to idolatrous nations with the Jews? This for the *lion*.—Cyrus liberated the Jews from captivity, and made a decree for their rebuilding the temple and restoring the worship of God. The work was embarrassed by the envy and artifices of the Samaritans, Ammonites, and Moabites, Ezra iv. but the decree of Darius, Ezra vi. removed the embarrassments

and accelerated the work. Under Artaxerxes, called Ahasuerus, who had Esther for his queen and Mordecai for his prime minister of state, the Jews enjoyed great prosperity and peace.—Do we find a single instance of persecution, or even of vexation, which occurred to the Jews through the whole duration of the Persian empire, if we except the decree of Smerdis the usurper, (but he reigned only one year) called Artaxerxes, Ezra iv., and the attempt of Haman which cost him his life? Was this mild and liberal disposition of the Persian kings toward the Jews represented by a *bear*?—Alexander granted many favors and privileges to the Jews. Antiochus the great, transported many of the Jews to the lesser Asia, and, providing liberally for their subsistence, committed his most important castles to their valor and fidelity for defence. Palestine lying between Syria and Egypt, the Jews suffered great calamities from the contests of their kings, but can more than three or four of all the successors of Alexander be justly denominated persecutors?—The Roman empire, ancient and modern, it is acknowledged, hath generally been a persecuting power, but if a persecuting character be not justly applicable to any one, is it not a conclusive exception against applying it to any of them all? But whether such an interpretation be formed from the representation of scripture, or hath proceeded from the common propensity of mankind to understand and judge of all subjects with reference to themselves, it is not the province of the writer to decide.

(To be continued.)

The nature and effects of Faith. Observations on John vii. 36.
"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

NUMBER I.

FAITH makes a very capital figure in the writings of the New Testament. Our Saviour declares this to be the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* This is essential to all spiritual life, to all our communion and acceptance with God.† Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.‡ Most important is it therefore that Christians should understand the nature and effects of faith, and that they should be indeed the subjects of this divine principle. Of this and its happy effects it is that our Saviour speaks in this passage. In the preceding verse, he had with great earnestness, the last, that great day of the feast of tabernacles, called all who were thirsty to come and drink; importing that he was the water of life, and that in him there was every thing necessary to cleanse and refresh the soul, and to give it all imaginable entertainment: That he was a fountain open for public use, for Jews and Gentiles, to wash in for sin and uncleanness; and that whosoever would, might come unto the waters, wash and be clean, drink and thirst no more, but live for ever. In this verse Jesus explains what he designed by coming to him and drinking, viz. believing on

* John vi. 29.

† Verse 53.

‡ Heb. xi. 6.

his name. Coming to Christ, and believing on his name, are frequently used in the New Testament to express the same thing, a genuine faith.* To every such person who believeth in Jesus it is promised, That out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This imports that his faith shall not be a dormant principle, but have great activity, producing the most useful and happy effects. It will be a principle of life flowing out in all pious, righteous and benevolent affections, exercises and conduct.

To illustrate this subject it will be natural to contemplate the nature of faith, its activity and effects.

With respect to faith in Christ, it is the act of a convinced, regenerate sinner, embracing him, in his whole character, as he is exhibited in the gospel. Every believer acting faith in Jesus Christ is a convinced sinner, who is brought practically to see that he is totally ruined and entirely helpless in himself, cursed by the law;† and that without a Saviour he must have inevitably perished. The commandment comes home to his conscience, and sin revives and he dies.‡ He is brought to renounce his own name and righteousness, and every name and righteousness, in heaven and on earth, but the name and righteousness of Jesus Christ. He is certain that there is salvation in no other. He has also a strong conviction that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, by whom he is reconciling the world unto himself, and that there is forgiveness with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He is a

regenerated, as well as a convinced sinner, whose heart is reconciled to God, and who believes the record which God hath given of his Son; that he is the resurrection and the life; set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins; and that through him all who do believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. The true believer is not only rationally and entirely convinced of these truths, but he fully believes them on the testimony of God, given in his word. It is essential to faith, that men assent to the truths of the gospel on the divine testimony; especially to those which respect the Redeemer, and salvation in his name. Faith also involves in its very nature the entire consent of the heart or will to these truths. It approves them and closes with them as excellent and worthy of all acceptance. The believer having been renewed by the Spirit, and illuminated with the knowledge of God, and his son Jesus Christ, apprehends a commanding beauty in the divine character, in the gospel, and in Jesus Christ: He appears to be a glorious, willing and all-sufficient Saviour. The believer rejoices exceedingly in the discovery of this rich treasure, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth it. His heart unites in supreme love to God and the Redeemer. He renounces all for Christ, and chooseth him as his only beloved. He chooseth or embraces him in his whole character, as prophet, priest and king. He submits to him as king, to be ruled by his law, and protected by his power, no less than to be saved by his death. Thus with

* Matth. xi. 28. John vi. 37.

† Gal. iii. 10. John iii.

‡ Rom. vii. 9.

the heart man believeth unto righteousness.* He embraces Christ on his own terms, as he is freely offered in the gospel, rejoicing to receive pardon, adoption, sanctification and eternal life as a free gift, to a guilty, helpless sinner, whom he realizes God might justly destroy for ever. He sets God upon the throne, takes his own place in the dust, at the foot of the cross, if it may be so expressed, and asks and receives all on the footing of sovereign grace, as it reigns through the righteousness of Jesus Christ; which is unto all and upon all them who believe without any difference.† This consent of the heart to the terms of mercy, and embracing Jesus as the only beloved of the soul, is an exercise of love. For the heart embraces nothing, unites to nothing but what it loves; and thus love is essential to the very nature of faith.

Further, an entire trust in Christ, or in God the Father, through him, is essential to a saving faith. Christ is offered in the gospel as an all-sufficient Saviour, as the resurrection and the life,‡ as able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him.§ God is offered as an all-sufficient portion, and in the covenant of grace makes himself over to the believer in Christ, as a covenant God and Father, to perform all things for him, to preserve him from all evil, and to conduct him to his heavenly kingdom. The true believer, sensible of his own weaknesses, dangers and unworthiness, and believing in the mercy, power, wisdom and faithfulness of his God and Redeemer,

places all his reliance upon him for the forgiveness of his sins, for grace to keep his commandments, to receive his soul to mercy when he dies, to raise him up at the last day, and to give him eternal life. He commits his immortal soul and all its interests into the hands of his Saviour, and with an unshaken confidence, rests upon him for the accomplishment of all that he hath promised. Hence that remarkable declaration of the apostle, 2. Tim. i. 12. "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." In this view, faith, in the Old Testament, is often termed trusting in God.

In the exercises of faith in Christ believers respect him, as a mediator between them and God the Father, by whom they come unto the Father, as the ultimate object of faith. Hence he is termed the way, and men are said to come to God by him. In this view it is that the apostle affirms of all those for whom Christ died, as is manifest, That they by him do believe in God, who raised him up from the dead and gave him glory, that their faith and hope might be in God.|| This is a doctrinal and experimental view of faith, as it respects Christ, unites the soul to him, and is justifying.

Faith, in a more large and comprehensive view, receives the testimony of God concerning all that he hath spoken: It embraces the promises, believes the divine threatenings, and realizes the invisible and immense objects and scenes of another world. It brings God and Christ, death, judgment and eternity near to the mind, and

* Rom x. 10. † Chap. iii. 22.

‡ John xi. 25.

§ Heb. vii. 25.

|| 1 Pet. i. 21.

enables the believer to live as seeing him who is invisible, and all those invisible things of which he hath spoken in his word. The apostle therefore terms faith, The substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.*

But the nature of faith will further appear from its excellent effects. It is a principle of life in the soul, of constant and powerful influence. Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. In another passage the Saviour taught, The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.† These are strong expressions, showing the power of a divine principle in the soul, and the activity of faith in the true Christian. It will produce wonderful and happy effects with respect to the believer himself, cleansing, refreshing and giving great peace and joy to his soul, and it will do great and lasting good to others.

It is to the believer himself, cleansing and refreshing as streams and rivers of water. It renders him ever green and fruitful, like trees planted by the rivers of water, which bring forth their fruit in due season, and whose leaf shall not wither. Faith, by the divine constitution, unites the believer to Christ the living vine, so that he derives constant life and nourishment from him, and is enabled to bear much fruit. Faith purifies his heart and works by love. That is, it operates thro' that love which is in faith itself, and which is essential to it. Love is a powerful principle of obedience. If a man love me, faith the Saviour, he will keep my words.‡

* Heb. xi. 1.

† John iv. 14.

‡ John xiv. 23.

Again it is written, this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.§ Faith not only purifies the heart and operates by the love which is in it, but as it apprehends the great love of God the Father and of our Lord Jesus Christ, constraining the believer to love and new obedience. In both these respects faith purifies the heart and makes the believer alive to God. Faith brings God near to him, and enables him, as the Psalmist expresseth it, to set him at his right hand, and to live as in his presence. It enables him to apprehend his greatness and glorious holiness, and so it purifies and stimulates him to duty. Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, he is changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Faith, as it makes the doctrines, examples, promises and threatenings of the word real; as it brings death, the resurrection of the dead, the judgment of the great day, the solemn and immense realities of eternity near to the mind, and causes the Christian to act under the influence of them, purifies his heart and makes him faithful. As water cleanseth those things to which it is applied, and as rain and dews, streams and rivers fertilize the earth, the fields and meadows, so doth faith cleanse the believer and render him fruitful. It applies the blood of Christ which cleanseth from all sin.

Further, the true believer hath great peace, comfort and joy in believing. Christ and his benefits are like streams and rivers to the thirsty traveller. How beautifully does the prophet Isaiah represent this! A man shall be as

§ 1 John v. 3.

an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest : as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.* Pardon, deliverance from wrath, sanctification, peace with God and in his own soul, communion with Christ in his word and ordinances, assurance of his love and the hopes of glory, are far more welcome to the believer than cold waters, streams and rivers to the thirsty traveller in a land of drought and heat. These are the sweet fruits of faith to the believer himself. Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. The peace of God which passeth understanding keeps the hearts of the saints. It is the promise of the faithful Saviour, Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.† In the exercises of faith the believer has always communion with God. And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ.‡ In believing, eternal life commences in the soul. The good seed is sown in good ground, and will spring up and bear fruit, some thirty, some sixty and some an hundred fold. The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth. Thus out of the Christian shall flow rivers of living water as it respects himself. He will be washed as with fountains and streams of water, that he may be without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. He will be made

fruitful, be comforted and refreshed as with gentle dews and showers, as with streams and rivers of water. As this principle of life within shall never fail, but be springing up, in the holy tendencies of his heart and conduct, into everlasting life, until his holy fruits and joys terminate in fulness of joy and pleasures for ever more; so it will be to him as streams and rivers whose waters never fail.

Further, out of the saints shall flow rivers of salutary and life giving waters to others. By their faith and good works they are the salt of the earth, and the light of the world. They prevent its total darkness and corruption, and render it luminous and savoury. By their doctrines, heavenly conversation, and examples, they instrumentally season it with piety and righteousness. Their instructions, prayers, counsels and influence make others holy and happy. Others, beholding their good works, glorify their Father who is in heaven.

Faithful parents, who devote their children to God according to his institution, instruct and pray with them abundantly, restrain them from sin, and wicked company, and so train them up in the way in which they should go, are more beneficial to them than rivers of water, or streams from Lebanon. By God's blessing, they make them useful, pious, pure and blessed. They may be the means of God's keeping covenant with their posterity unto a thousand generations. Their children thus educated may become the ornaments of the churches, pillars in the house of God, pillars of the earth, upon whom the Lord shall set the government of the world.§

* Isaiah xxxii. 2.

† John xiv. 27.

‡ 1 John i. 3.

§ 1 Sam. ii. 8.

How useful and refreshing may they be to the churches, to the commonwealth, and to all good men ! How happy are the effects of peace-makers, of righteous, prayerful, orderly, wise and charitable men ? How salutary are their counsels and prayers, how refreshing their charity and alms deeds ? When they warm the naked with the fleece of their flocks, feed the hungry from their tables, visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, and with good words and good deeds make the hearts of the poor, the sick, the fatherless, and widow to sing for joy ? When by refreshing the bowels of the saints they cause many thanksgivings to redound to the name of the Lord ! How far and wide do those refreshing waters flow forth, when by their charity and care, their labor and influence, the gospel is preached to the poor in distant countries and settlements, and souls are born, and churches gathered unto the Lord Jesus ? When by their means the gospel is sent to the heathen, and the dark places of the earth are illumined with the light of life, and the regions of death are peopled with Christians rejoicing in the name of the Lord ? How salutary and refreshing are pastors after God's heart, who feed his people with knowledge and understanding, and are a favour of life unto life unto immortal souls ? Who turn sinners from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God ? Who perfect the saints and edify the body of Christ ? Such are the waters which flow forth from those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. How much more useful and refreshing are they, than rivers which pour their waters through extensive countries, fertilize a thousand meads, and give

beauty, strength and opulence to the most renowned cities ? Where these waters come the sick are healed and the dead live. How much better are these waters of Israel than Abana and Pharpar and all the waters of Damascus ? When the rivers shall be dried away, and there shall be no more sea, when the sun and stars shall shine no more, these waters shall increase their sweetness, rise higher and higher, and flow more extensively for ever and ever.

How blessed is the believer ? His fruit shall never fail ; he shall never come into condemnation. How rich is the grace bestowed upon him ? How immense are his obligations to gratitude, praise and new obedience ? How should the saints take courage and be comforted, and all the children of Zion be glad in their King ?

(To be continued.)

TO THE EDITORS OF THE CONNECTICUT EVANGELICAL MAGAZINE.

REV. GENTLEMEN,

'AS it is your manifest desire to receive what religious information any can afford, and since accounts of the outpouring of God's spirit never fail to gladden the hearts of his children, no one needs an apology for transmitting you accounts of this kind, even though the work be not in the immediate place of his residence.

IN the society of New-Canaan, Columbia county, state of New-York, there has been experienced a considerable degree of the special influences of divine grace. As it is a society destitute of a stated minister, and since he who sends you these lines was more particularly acquainted with

the circumstances than any other preacher; being also now settled in an adjoining parish, he is requested to write you an account of the work.

In the month of November, 1800, I was passing through the place above mentioned, and from the influence of a neighboring minister, received an application to return and supply them a few Sabbaths. Accordingly I returned. On learning their religious state, it appeared that they had formerly enjoyed the stated administration of the gospel; but had then been destitute about three years. During this term they had been supplied with preaching but a small part of the time. Even the form of religion was now scarcely visible among them. It is true, there was the remains of a church, wherein were nine male members, and a few more than that number of females. Still, it would admit of a doubt whether it were any honor to the cause of religion to say there was a church in the place. When I first drew near the house of worship, I beheld from its forlorn appearance an affecting comment on that passage of the prophecy of Isaiah where he speaks of "a great forsaking in the midst of the land." The words of the prophet were also no less applicable when the people were convened. Between twenty and thirty persons composed the whole assembly. As I came directly from a place in which people were quite attentive to divine worship, and having had but a few weeks experience in the trying work of preaching the gospel, I returned to my quarters with a heavy heart. The next Sabbath presented much the same scene. The number was very nearly the same. At this time my

feelings of discouragement, and my view of being useless, led me to contemplate leaving them; although I had given encouragement of tarrying a number of weeks longer. The Sabbath following I felt some more encouraged. Perhaps there were twice as many as attended the other two Sabbaths. About this number continued till my term expired. And "blessed be God!" notwithstanding all this darkness, some rays of light had then begun to appear. The operation of the spirit of God was visible in two or three instances.

As I was conversing one evening on religious subjects, in the family where I lodged, a young lady belonging to the family handed me a bible, pointing to this text, wishing me to preach from it, Psalm xxv. 16. *Turn thee unto me and have mercy upon me, for I am desolate and afflicted.* A few general remarks were made in reply; and an opportunity was taken, the next day, to learn what this unexpected incident appeared to indicate. Accordingly, it was found, that two Sabbaths previously to this, which was the second of my preaching in the society, such impressions were made upon her mind as it was impossible for her to erase; and which had been continually increasing. Soon after this, another young lady, residing in the same family, appeared to be specially awakened. In the course of a few days, she first received a happy relief through a crucified Saviour. On the Sabbath-evening previously to my leaving the place, a question was asked a young gentleman belonging to the family, to this import: whether he would deem it just should God now make him eternally miserable? He answered,

that he must confess he could not realize the justice of it. At this the young lady who was mentioned as being last awakened, broke forth into a strain of astonishment, and addressed him thus : *How can you think such vile worms as we do not deserve to be in hell for ever !* It was then inquired, whether she had not, of late, experienced a particular change in her feelings ? She observed that she had : and then related, that very early in the morning, after a distressed night, light from the Lord shone most astonishingly into her soul ; that her views of God and the Saviour were such as she could not express. " This day," said she, " was the first time I ever heard preaching. This has been a new day to me. I never properly heard a sermon till to day." The next morning I left the society ; perceiving that the people in general were still remarkably indifferent with regard to either attending on preaching, or contributing to its support. This was in December. I had supplied them five Sabbaths.

The next spring, being called to supply in a neighboring parish, I visited this people ; and found one more instance of hopeful conversion. There appeared also, one or two instances of awakening, which commenced some time before. A number of new instances of serious thoughtfulness were likewise now seen. I learnt, that through the winter, they had been destitute of any stated preaching. The people were at this time engaged in repairing their meeting house. And their house being not finished till fall, they engaged no supply through the summer. During this season, they were, however, favored with preaching a number of Sabbaths by neighboring ministers. They

had also frequent lectures, by a candidate from an adjoining parish ; whose labors among them appeared to be accompanied with divine power upon the hearts of a number. In the first part of this season, a number of the church appeared to be quickened, so that the ordinance of the supper was administered ; which for a long time had been greatly neglected. At this period, three young persons, who were the first that received a hopeful change, came forward and made public profession of their faith. This was a mean of striking the minds of a number of other youth, as afterwards appeared. Though in the summer there were not many instances of awakening, in the autumn, there was a more refreshing shower of divine grace than had been before experienced. The aspect of the principal young people was now remarkably changed. Youthful amusements, to which they were before greatly attached, were now entirely discontinued. As the work first began among the youth, it appeared chiefly to continue among them. Those who were leaders in vanity seemed to be first arrested.

Their meeting house being now finished, the pulpit was supplied, for the most part through the winter. I was told, that from the close of the autumn to the abatement of winter, the people appeared solemn and attentive, but new instances of awakening were but few. Early in the following spring, which was 1802, there appeared another most special refreshing. This seemed to spread the gospel net still more extensively. Some of every class were by this time the subjects of the work. The number of con-

ferences were now increased, and more fully attended than ever they had before been. Providence so appointed it, that soon after this refreshing commenced, I supplied them a number of Sabbaths. Oh ! how astonishing the contrast, in the appearance at this time on the Lord's day, from that which was exhibited when I first preached in the place. There was now a decent house, thronged with a numerous and solemn audience. A number of heads of families had become sharers in these blessed effects; and consequently, the small number of praying families were happily increased. In addition to the conferences which were then attended, the young people appointed one to be regarded weekly; which was statedly attended by a very good number, and which now still continues.

In the course of the summer, new instances of awakening were seldom; and it no more increased. There is, however, still evidence that the Lord has been there, and that he hath set apart a number for himself. Fifty-four have been added to the church. Of these, thirty were young unmarried people. A number of the others were persons in quite the early part of life.—The writer wishes that the youth would reflect on this with peculiar attention. You see that it is in the morning God generally calls his laborers into the vineyard.

A few circumstances may be added, evincing the peculiar *grace* and *sovereignty* of God in this work.

Some families appear to be almost wholly taken; and others altogether left. In some cases, only one individual was taken from a neighborhood. One family, in which there were three young men, was remarkably visit-

ed. At first, the mind of one of the young men was arrested; which appeared to disseminate through the family, till each of the three, and both the parents, were the hopeful subjects of regenerating grace. Formerly, this family were quite neglectful of divine things; and were remarkably engaged in pursuit of perishable wealth; but now, on communion days, all the adult members are seen commemorating a crucified Saviour. In another family, there are five young people, four sisters and a brother, all of whom have hopefully become pious.

About the close of the visible awakening, I was called to attend the funeral of one of the late converts; who was a young lady about seventeen years of age. On the Sabbath preceding her death, which was ten weeks after she had publicly joined herself to the church, she was at meeting taking an active part with the singers. Though her constitution had ever been infirm, she then enjoyed usual health. On Friday following, she was entombed in the silent grave. One year previous to this, divine revelation was almost entirely neglected in the family. The vile invectives of Thomas Paine were believed and read, by the head of the family, to the utter exclusion of God's revealed word. But, in the course of the preceding season, Jehovah was so gracious as to send his Spirit, which banished infidelity from their dwelling, and hopefully renewed the hearts of both the parents, as well as their child. Hereby they were prepared to part with a dear and first born member of their family; and through divine grace, their child also was hopefully prepared to part with her parents, leaving them to mourn, not without hope, either

in themselves, or with respect to her. For a number of months previous to her death, she appeared to be not of this world. She was often heard to speak of death with the greatest degree of composure. At the last funeral that was attended in the place, which was a number of months before we were called to attend hers, she remarked that the bell would next toll for her. On the last Sabbath she attended meeting, she observed to one of her young sisters in profession, that she should live but a short time. And while she mourned that her graces were no more lively, she also added that she was willing to go.—Being much transported in public worship, by the singing of the seventeenth psalm, long metre, she was seen to take her book and sing the same psalm in the evening, after she returned home; which was the last time she was ever heard to sing. Her disorder, which was a nervous pleurisy, was so violent after she was looked upon dangerous, that she was able to make no remarks in her dying hour. She had already given evidence of her good estate, in the most favorable and desirable season; in the time of life, of youth and health.

From what has taken place in this society, it appears evident to the candid mind, that a change of heart effectually removes prejudices against the doctrines of the gospel, and corrects speculative errors. Indeed, it may be remarked, that those who are the most devoutly engaged in a pious life, appear to be the most distinguishingly in favor of those humiliating doctrines which are so opposed by unregenerate minds. They profess in general, to have found by experience, as well as by the word of God, that by nature they are

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totally sinful; that if they are Christians, they made no approach to holy obedience till their hearts were savingly renewed; that God from eternity had a glorious plan respecting all he does; and that the particular state of every individual is included in this plan.

It is true, the subjects of this work have not been so numerous as in many places; yet, may not this be classed among the specimens of God's matchless grace to a guilty world? Should even a part of this number endure to the end, and be finally admitted into the celestial kingdom, how great would be the display of divine grace! Oh, how joyful the consideration that there is the least gleam of hope in the case of any! How can they who are *Christians* forbear to awake and admire their Saviour? Had *sinners* a view of their critical state, how could they forbear trembling? And how can pious ministers of the gospel fail of being most sensibly engaged in so interesting a work? But, all are dependent upon divine grace! How dependent are ministers for every degree of success! A blessed consideration! The young and inexperienced in this work, may therefore go forth upon the strength of the God of Israel, as David met the champion of Gath.

I am, gentlemen,
with much respect,
your humble servant,
JOHN WATERS.
New-Concord, Nov. 1, 1803.

From Viator to Christianus.

(Contin. from Vol. III. p. 225.)

LETTER IV.

DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIEND,

MY present object is, further to aid you and myself in improving the observations made

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in my two first letters. In attempting to do which, I shall attend to several particulars.

1. If the labor of persons divinely enlightened, was rightly explained, it must follow of course, that real Christians, though they may have occasional lapses into sin, will on the whole make good citizens. They will fill their places in all their social relations with fidelity, from the highest to the lowest grade in society.

Persons who are clothed with authority, will remember, 'The God of Israel saith, the rock of Israel spake to me, he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.'

Persons who are in the more humble walks of life, when they have 'Rulers who are not a terror to good works, but to evil,' will be mindful of that solemn declaration, 'Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God'; and be ready, to 'lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty'; and to 'render to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.'

If the foregoing observations are true, the tendency of religion, unquestionably, is favorable to civil society, and of consequence deserves the patronage of all who seek the best good of mankind in this present world. Public men ought to be now, what kings eventually will be, 'nursing fathers to the church.' Those persons who oppose the Christian religion, and labor to unsettle the minds of their fellow citizens from every thing serious, cannot be viewed as friendly to the best interests of society.

2. If persons divinely enlight-

ened, are willing to be absent from the body, to be present with the Lord, and labor, as the apostle asserts, whether present or absent to be accepted of him, we may easily understand what he means in the same chapter, when he says, 'If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are done away, behold all things have become new.'

He does not mean, that he has any new faculties, but that his views, affections and conduct are new. His moral taste is essentially altered. He is in a moral view a different man.—Formerly he was selfish in all his affections and pursuits, but now he is benevolent—he loves God supremely and his neighbor as himself; he really wishes to promote the highest good of the intellectual world.—Formerly his 'affections were placed on things which are seen and temporal'; his cry was, 'who will shew me any good'? His only anxiety when he thought about death, was to be happy.—But he now finds his 'affections placed on things which are not seen, and are eternal'; and longs to be holy: his cry is, 'Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me': when he thinks of death, he finds it has lost its sting, and he is 'willing rather to be absent from the body to be present with the Lord.'

3. If persons divinely enlightened, 'labor whether present or absent to be accepted of the Lord,' we may safely conclude that they will readily give up, whatever they may find to be incompatible with the divine interest and honor.

Self denial is an essential part of true religion. 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.'

Riches, honors and pleasures, the idols of the world, must not be worshipped, however strong the inducement, as it is inconsistent with the interest and honor of Jehovah, and contrary to the express prohibition of his word: 'Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, acceptable and perfect will of God.'

Self denial is not only an essential, but a very profitable part of religion: 'If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.'—'For whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.'—'There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my sake and the gospel,' but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.'—It is clearly evident, that whatever any person may give up, of a personal nature, with a view to the divine glory, will eventually turn to his own advantage.—Self denial, tho' contrary to all the natural feelings of the heart, has often been complied with, by those into whose hearts 'God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus

Christ,' as is evident from many instances left on divine record. Out of those which might be mentioned, the following may be considered as one of the most striking: 'By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompence of reward.'

Those persons who are actuated by the Holy Spirit, will likewise in every age of the world, be willing to sacrifice all for Christ.

4. If persons who are divinely enlightened, labor whether present or absent to be accepted of the Lord; it is natural to suppose, that every token of the divine approbation will be highly pleasing to them—and that they will never feel fully satisfied, however eligible their situation may be in other respects, so long as they find in themselves the remains of sin. They therefore absolutely despair of complete felicity on earth—and are looking forward to a better world, each one saying with the Psalmist, 'I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness;' knowing from divine promise, that he shall then be crowned, with 'honor, immortality and eternal life.'

My dear Friend, You will permit me, before I close this letter, to observe that it is my ardent wish, that we, who hope we have 'tasted and found that the Lord is good,' may profit by the foregoing observations; that we may guard against that flood of infidelity, and great immorality, which are so prevalent at this day; that

we may neither make shipwreck of our faith, dishonor God, nor lose our souls !

As we have enlisted, professedly, under the Captain of our Salvation, it becomes us to 'stand fast in the faith, to quit ourselves like men, to be strong.' 'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, and against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' We ought therefore carefully to attend to the following apostolic exhortation ; 'Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness ; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace : Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit.'

Religion is in the highest sense, worthy of our love and notice, as rational and immortal creatures. This is the 'one thing needful : —The good part which cannot be taken away.'

As we are dying men, soon every earthly good will fail us. The enjoyments of this world, are like Jonah's gourd, momentary. 'Here we have no continuing city.' Let us therefore be wise, and 'use the world as not abusing it ;' and make the divine glory the great pole star in all our conduct, trusting only in the merits of the great Redeemer for mercy.

The danger we are both in, from the present languid state of religion, and increase of infidelity, has been the occasion, of my writing this, and the preceding letters. Many persons are saying now, as they did in the prophet Malachi's day, 'It is vain to serve God ; and what profit is it, that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts ? And now we call the proud happy : yea, they that work wickedness are set up : yea, they that tempt God are even delivered !' Shall we desert ? Or remember that 'the triumphing of the wicked is short ?' And that it is thus written in the volumes of eternal truth : 'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. I know it shall be well with them that fear God, who fear before him ?'

Tho' there is reason to fear that some of the professors of religion, are like the foolish virgins, who had no oil in their lamps, and that others may be addressed as John did the Angel of the Church at Sardis, 'Thou hast a name to live, but art dead ;' the real cause of Christ will prove victorious.

The open enemies of the church may increase in number and subtlety—they may appear for a season as though they would expel Christianity from the world, but they will not prevail. God has not forgotten his Church, and never will : 'Can a woman forget

her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.' *Jacob is now small*; but soon that prophecy shall be fulfilled, 'The place is too strait for me; give place to me that I may dwell.' The Church now has her spots, but will presently 'Look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.' There is not only a sure promise, but many omens for good, in providence. God is evidently making, in many places, great displays of his grace.

May we take courage, persevere in the Christian course, and 'give the Lord no rest till he establish, till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.' 'I believed, therefore have I spoken.' 'In due time we shall reap if we faint not.'

I am, dear Christian friend,
your's in Christ,

VIATOR.

Extract of a Letter from the Secretary of the London Missionary Society, to the Trustees of the Missionary Society of Connecticut, dated,

LONDON, August 22, 1803.

IT always affords great pleasure to the Directors of the London Missionary Society, to maintain a correspondence with the faithful and zealous servants of our common Lord in different parts of the earth, and especially with our dear brethren in America, with whom we have the double union of blood and of grace. Your favor of the 20th of April last was read to the Directors, and heard with much satisfaction, as it gives us a further proof of your zealous

efforts to promote the gospel of our blessed Redeemer, in that extensive field which it is your honor to cultivate. Your harvest is great indeed, while the laborers are very few; our prayers continually ascend with your's, that He in whose hand is the residue of the Spirit, may abundantly increase their number, and enable your Society not only to visit the vacant churches, but to extend your Christian benevolence to the native heathen, multitudes of whom are perishing for lack of knowledge.

I beg leave to acknowledge also, in the name of our Society, the receipt of a large number of the Connecticut Evangelical Magazines, for which acceptable present, be pleased to present to our American friends our sincere thanks. They will be read with much pleasure by many of the Directors, and have already afforded to me great satisfaction. The work appears to me to be ably conducted as well as handsomely executed, and I doubt not will prove a blessing to the country around you. As Editor of the Evangelical Magazine, (to which office I have succeeded in the room of our late excellent brother, Mr. Eyre) I shall make free to insert some of your pieces, particularly on the subject of infidelity. The circumstantial accounts you give of the late revival of religion in several places, are extraordinary indeed; but are so well authenticated that no doubt can be entertained of their solidity. Would to God we might see in England the same blessed outpouring of the Divine Spirit! The good work, we doubt not, is still going forward, tho' more gradually and silently with us.

I am directed by the Society

to send you, as a token of our friendship, the last volume of the Evangelical Magazine, and all the numbers of the present year hitherto published. I trust you will favor us with frequent correspondence, shall we say, twice in the year? and I will endeavor to transmit to you every religious event of importance.

Our Society has in contemplation sending several more Missionaries to the East Indies, and a Mission to the island of Ceylon, which last we hope Mr. Voss, an excellent minister who was near the Cape of Good Hope, will direct. One of the Magazines will inform you of the wonderful success which it hath pleased God to give to the labors of Mr. Geriké in the East, which will afford you unspeakable delight.

We are waiting with some anxiety to hear from our excellent brother Vanderkemp, from Algoa Bay, but suppose his dispatches are delayed by their circuitous route thro' Holland.

I am, Dear Brethren, in behalf of the London Missionary Society, and with great respect,

Your affectionate Brother,

GEORGE BURDER,

SECRETARY.

Religious Intelligence.

Berkshire Missionary Society.

THE annual meeting of the Missionary Society in the counties of Berkshire and Columbia, was holden at Stockbridge, on the 20th of September. A sermon was delivered, on the occasion, by the Rev. Thomas Allen of Pittsfield, from Psalm xiv. 7. *Oh that the salvation of Israel were come*

out of Zion! When the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.

The Trustees made to the Society a report of their doings relative to the employment of Missionaries, and expenditures of monies, since their appointment in September 1802. From this report it appears, that the Trustees employed the following Missionaries the last year; viz. the Rev. Joseph Avery twelve weeks in the county of Luzerne, in the State of Pennsylvania, and in the counties of Oneida, Chenango, Tioga, Cayuga and Onondaga, in the State of New-York; the Rev. Benjamin Wooster twelve weeks, in the new settlements between Lake George and Canada line, and in the towns on the New-York and Vermont shores of Lake Champlain—and the Rev. Jabez Chadwick sixteen weeks in the county of Luzerne. This report states also, that the Rev. Mr. Wooster was appointed to perform another mission of sixteen weeks, and to take nearly the same tour which he did before,—that he had entered on the service, but had not finished his mission.

From the journal of the Rev. Mr. Avery, it appears that he commenced his mission the 24th of November last—that he travelled 986 miles, preached 80 times—attended 22 religious conferences and 5 funerals—visited 106 families and 6 schools—baptized 8 children, assisted in one ordination, and received in contributions, for the use of the Society, 12 dollars 94 cents.

The journal of the Rev. Mr. Wooster states, that he commenced his mission the 18th of January last—that he preached 75 times—attended 21 conferences and

other religious meetings,—baptized 10 children, administered the Lord's supper once, and received in contributions for the Society 24 dollars 82 cents.

Rev. Mr. Chadwick, in performing his mission, which he commenced the 28th of April last, rode 1086 miles, preached 122 sermons, assisted in forming one church of 27 members, admitted 12 persons to the communion of churches—baptized 4 adults and 21 children—administered the Lord's supper 4 times, visited 2 schools and 80 families—attended 2 religious conferences and 6 church meetings—and received in contributions, for the Society, 42 dollars 38 cents.

By these three Missionaries the Society has afforded to the new settlements forty weeks of ministerial service, and 277 sermons, in the course of the last year.

The Missionaries bring back accounts of their reception and encouragement in their work, which must be animating to all who love the prosperity of Zion. They uniformly testify, that the people are generally disposed to attend upon the preached word, are prompt and apparently sincere in expressing their thanks to the Society, and, in many instances, through the infinite mercy of a sovereign God, their hearts are opened to receive, in the love of it, the truth as it is in Jesus.

At the above mentioned meeting, the Society, in conformity to their constitution, proceeded to elect, by ballot, the officers for the ensuing year. The following were chosen; viz. Rev. Ephraim Judson, President; the Hon. Timothy Edwards, Esq. Vice President; the Hon. William Walker, Esq. Treasurer; Rev. Alvan Hyde, Secretary, and Rev. Oli-

ver Ayer, Clerk.—Rev. Jesse Townsend, Rev. Aaron Bascom, Rev. Dr. Stephen West, Rev. Ephraim Judson, Rev. Alvan Hyde, Rev. David Perry, the Hon. William Walker, Esq. the Hon. Timothy Edwards, Esq. Deacon Stephen Nash, Deacon John Hall, and the Hon. Barnabas Bidwell, Esq. Trustees.

Extract of a letter from a person in Hubberton, to his father in Connecticut, dated Sept. 20, 1803.

“HONORED SIR,

“MY last informed you of the good work in Pittsford, West-Rutland, and some other places, and the hopeful prospect here. At Pittsford the number hopefully born into the kingdom of grace, is 200, or upwards. At West-Rutland 100, or more. About one month since there was the sound of abundance of rain in Benson, which still continues to pour down, and it is emphatically a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Converts spring up as the grass. The wilderness and solitary places are glad for them; and this northern desert is made to blossom as the rose. Saints feed on hidden manna, and join in the joy of angels. I have heard some grey headed Christians exclaim in extacy, “Lord now let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen of thy salvation.” The good-Lord is now by his spirit in this sinful town, and a greater shaking I never saw amongst dry bones. Oh pray for the enlargement and peace of Zion. May her borders be as extensive as the globe—her children numerous as the human family—her peace as a river—and her righteousness as the waves of the sea!”

ORDINATION.

ON Thursday the 10th day of November 1803, the Rev. TIMOTHY STONE was ordained Pastor of the consociated church of Christ in Cornwall. The Rev. *Samuel J. Mills* of Torrington, made the introductory prayer; the Rev. *Bezaleel Pinneo* of Milford, preached a sermon happily adapted to the occasion, from 2 Tim. ii. 15.; the Rev. *Ammi R. Robbins* of Norfolk, made the consecrating prayer; the Rev. *Peter Starr* of Warren, delivered the charge; the Rev. *Asael Hooker* of Goshen, gave the right hand of fellowship; and the Rev. *Alexander Gillet* of Torrington, made the concluding prayer. Solemnity and order pervaded the assembly.

POETRY.

COMMUNICATED AS ORIGINAL.

Reflections on the end of the Year.

1. **T**H' obedient sun, at God's command,
Once more his course has run;
Another year's forever fled,
And a new year begun.
2. Within the year that's now no more,
What multitudes are gone,
Summon'd by death's relentless call,
Into a world unknown?
3. While thousands, younger far than I,
Have clos'd their earthly race,

'Midst tombs unnumber'd I am spar'd,
A monument of grace.

4. And while along life's dang'rous path
Securely I have trod,
Reflect, my soul; what have I done
To serve my guardian God?
5. How many precious hours and days
Have I in trifles spent;
What blessings unimprov'd appear,
What murmur'ing discontent!
6. Blinded by earth's deluding toys,
Which lead the heart astray,
How often have I turn'd aside
From wisdom's narrow way!
7. Alas! how slowly have I learn'd
Religion's heavenly art;
How seldom have I rais'd to God
An undivided heart!
8. Ev'n in his presence, in his house,
Before his awful throne,
How often have my treach'rous tho'ts
To countless follies flown!
9. How cold my zeal to praise his name
Who bled upon the tree;
How weak has been my love to him
Who groan'd and di'd for me!
10. Lord, should'st thou strictly mark
my faults,
And bring thy judgment near,
Beneath thy searching, holy eye,
Oh, how must I appear!
11. But thou art LOVE; thy grace can
cleanse
And sanctify my soul;
The precious blood of Christ can make
The wounded sinner whole.
12. Lord, glorify thy boundless grace
By saving me from sin:
Cast out, my God, the hateful foe,
And make me only thine.

ASPASIO.

Donation to the Missionary Society of Connecticut.

December 21, 1803. Rev. Benjamin Trumbull, avails of
his Sermon,

D. C.

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